

# NOMINATION OF ROBIN RABORN

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON

## BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

## UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

NOMINATION OF ROBIN RABORN TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DE-  
VELOPMENT

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AUGUST 4, 1983

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Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs



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THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 1983

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(III)

## NOMINATION OF ROBIN RABORN

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 1983

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING,  
AND URBAN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The committee met at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-538, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, presiding.

Present: Senators D'Amato, Garn, Hawkins, and Proxmire.

### OPENING REMARKS OF SENATOR D'AMATO

Senator D'AMATO [presiding]. The committee will come to order.

This hearing is to consider the nomination of Robin Raborn by the Senate Banking Committee.

First, I understand we have the General Counsel, Mr. John Knapp, who will be the first witness.

There is some question with respect to this particular position of Assistant Secretary. I understand, Mr. Knapp, that the Secretary is out of town and that you therefore are Acting Secretary at this moment as well as General Counsel please proceed.

### STATEMENT OF JOHN J. KNAPP, GENERAL COUNSEL, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. KNAPP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, on July 1, Senator Proxmire and Senator Riegle wrote to Secretary Pierce presenting several questions regarding the Department's justification for the creation of the position of Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. In Secretary Pierce's absence, I responded to them—to that inquiry on July 22, as Acting Secretary. I have been asked to come to this hearing today to expand upon, and to respond to further questions about the Department's justification as set forth in that letter.

The first question I was asked by Senators Proxmire and Riegle was, "When was the position of Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs authorized by the Congress?"

In responding to that, I said that the specific position had not been authorized by the Congress, that the Department's act lists eight Assistant Secretary positions. It ties none of them to any specific function, other than the Federal Housing Commissioner, but says that the positions or persons in those positions are to perform such functions, powers and duties as the Secretary shall prescribe from time to time. And I said that Secretary Pierce had created this office administratively in April of this year, although I may

say that the decision to create the position had been made, I think, about a year earlier than that, and the Secretary had been searching for a candidate to fill the position for quite some time before it, in fact, was created in April.

I must confess to having inadequately researched the question when I made that response. I have since found in looking back at the legislative history that when the Congress last increased the number of Assistant Secretary positions in the Department, it did, in fact, specifically contemplate that one of those positions would be an Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 increased the number of Assistant Secretary positions in the Department from six to eight. The legislative history is that that provision was in the House bill. It was not in the Senate bill. It was accepted by the conference.

In looking at the House report, the House report explains the Congress intent in creating those two positions and how Congress contemplated that they would be filled. One of them was an upgrading of the Assistant Secretary of Administration from a level 5 to a level 4 position, confirmed by the Senate. The other Assistant Secretary position authorized by the bill was said to be for an Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Reading from the House committee report on that legislation in 1974:

The new Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs authorized by this amendment would be the principal advisor to the Secretary on matters relating to public information, public opinion, participation in public events, and consumer education. He—

We've come a ways since 1974, as you can see—

Would be responsible, among other things, for assessing probable public opinion reaction to new and often complex proposed Departmental programs and policies. He also would have crucial responsibility for administration within the Department of the Freedom-of-Information Act.

In three executive departments—Defense, State, and Health, Education and Welfare—the chief public affairs officer occupies an Assistant Secretary position. The function is equally important in the spectrum of activities administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development—activities that, in one way or another, affect nearly all of our citizens.

That ends the quote from the House report. So that as you can see, there has been a history of congressional acknowledgment of the advisability of elevating the public affairs function in the Department to the Assistant Secretary level. I would say that since that time, 1974, that report referred to the fact that the public affairs officer was at that level in three other departments. My understanding is that since that time, that is also true of four additional Cabinet departments.

Just to play out the history, notwithstanding the authorization in 1974, my understanding is that, in fact, a nomination for that office did not subsequently go up to the Congress. I don't speak with authority on how this happened, but after consulting the oral historians in the Department, I believe that shortly after the 1974 legislation, there was a change in the administration within the Department. The Secretary went to OMB. Secretary Hills thereafter created a different Assistant Secretary position with a function, among others, of consumer protection, I believe justified in part on

the reference in the House report that one of the functions of this position was to be consumer education. At that time, that made eight full Assistant Secretary positions in the Department. The number was later reduced to seven by the merger of two Housing Assistant Secretaries, subsequently reduced to six at the beginning of this administration by the elimination of the Assistant Secretary for Neighborhood and Voluntary Associations and Consumer Protection, reducing it to six. As you know, you have recently considered the nomination of an Assistant Secretary for Public Housing and, therefore, this action brings the complement up to the fully authorized eight.

I refer to the history only to supplement what I said in my letter of July 22, to indicate what I did not indicate then, because, in all truth, I didn't know it then, the prior congressional consideration of the question of establishment of this position at the Assistant Secretary level.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator D'AMATO. Thank you, Mr. Knapp. Senator Hawkins is here, and I think she has a statement, she has a very special interest in these proceedings since Robin Raborn is a Floridian. Senator Hawkins.

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HAWKINS

Senator HAWKINS. And I'm sure she will be again. We have that great advantage in that State that brings almost everyone back.

We welcome you here today, Robin. It's been my pleasure to know Miss Raborn for quite sometime. She's very well qualified. Senator D'Amato and I take pride in sharing her residences. I have a particular personal interest because she was raised in Florida. Her parents lived in Boynton Beach. Both sets of her grandparents are early settlers in Florida. That's unique in our State. Most Floridians come from someplace else. Robin attended high school in Delray Beach and has been very active since her young tender years in many activities that I'm interested in. She's very well qualified for the position the President has nominated her. Her background is outstanding. Her résumé speaks for itself. I am very impressed that she has been involved in so many volunteer activities, very consumer-oriented. Her activities in the drug abuse programs throughout the United States, take a great place in my heart.

We welcome you here and look forward to your confirmation.

Senator D'AMATO. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Hawkins has indicated Florida was a place that Miss Raborn was raised. She was born here in Washington, D.C. I'm happy to say that she is a New Yorker in terms of her professional career. In that career, Robin has had a breadth of experience in the area of public affairs that I believe well suits her and well qualifies her for this position. Although the Department of Housing and Urban Development has absorbed substantial budget cuts, I believe that this administration has not, will not and should not abandon its commitment to provide safe and decent housing for all of our citizens. Nevertheless, one would have to acknowledge that the public perception of the massive Federal commitment to hous-

ing is at an all-time low, in spite of the enormous expenditures still being made in this area.

Thus, I think it is probably more important at this time that the Department have someone of Robin's capabilities to help reverse this false perception and to bring to the public's attention the very substantial commitment that this administration has to housing.

Robin, I wish you well in the task ahead. This administration will no doubt benefit from your expertise and the qualities that you have demonstrated in your past positions to help reverse this image and also to help the fight for legitimate cost containment in such a way that it will not destroy HUD programs but instead make them even more credible and efficient.

Senator Proxmire, if you have a statement?

Senator PROXMIRE. I have no statement. I have some questions, Mr. Chairman.

Senator D'AMATO. Please proceed.

Senator PROXMIRE. Very good. This is kind of a dilemma here, because the Department has nominated an outstanding person. I mean that. I think Robin Raborn has good qualifications, although I disagree with her political taste—she's a strong Republican. I notice you campaigned for Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, Lamar Alexander, Howard Baker, and Senator Al D'Amato. I think you have very good taste, given the unfortunate fact that you're a Republican. [Laughter.]

What concerns me is that this job itself seems to me to be one that I question whether it's necessary. We haven't had this position for over 9 years. Now, 14 months before the election, we have a person appointed, with strong political background, as the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Public Relations. It just seems to me that the timing in an agency which has been reducing—I thought had been reducing its staff and reducing its size, seems to me to be illogical and also suggests that the timing of this is to advance the political fortunes of the Republican Party in 1984.

Mr. KNAPP. Senator, I would respond only, beyond the justification that we've given for the position which is really to more effectively disseminate information, particularly to program users, information regarding the Department's programs, only two comments. First, as to the timing, it is, as you say, now, in August 1983, 14 months before the election, but as I indicated in my earlier comments, the office, in fact, was created in April of this year, and even that was at least a year, in my recollection, after the decision to create the office had been made. I believe, in fact, that the act of creating the office was coincident with the selection of Ms. Raborn as the nominee by the Secretary. The Secretary, himself, had, in fact, made a decision to create the office, I think, roughly, by the end of 1981 or early 1982, and a search for a candidate had occurred at the time.

In fact, therefore, I don't look at the timing as coincident with the election, as you indicate.

Senator PROXMIRE. Why shouldn't this be a position for management. In the first place, Ms. Raborn's background is primarily in management. She's a strong manager. She has a good record in management in the private sector, and I am sure she could do a good job. You need a top level manager in HUD, according to the

criticism that I've heard. Yet, instead of being appointed for that function, primarily it's a matter of public affairs, a matter of promoting the public perception of the activities of the agency.

Mr. KNAPP. I think that we consider all our Assistant Secretary positions to be management positions, management of particular functions. Certainly, that's true of the Assistant Secretary for Housing, and even in the more purely—let's say, staff rather than line functions, like policy development and research and legislation. The critical difference, I think, as indicated in the early response, and I am sure Ms. Raborn will testify, is the focus of the position.

There is, we think, a difference between the natural focus of a position that is a staff function within the Office of the Secretary, as opposed to an Assistant Secretary on a comparable level with all the other Assistant Secretaries. It is just more natural and inevitably easier to have a departmentwide focus in the position of Assistant Secretary.

Senator PROXMIRE. Don't we need management of day-to-day operations in the field? Isn't that really what we should be administering rather than public affairs?

Mr. KNAPP. In some sense, I think probably the Assistant Secretary for Administration or the Under Secretary might be better qualified to speak to that, the management in the field.

There is a good deal of overlap, obviously. The housing offices in the field are managed partially through the Assistant Secretary for Housing, the CPD through the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development. In terms of making the judgment of what is more deserving of an Assistant Secretary position, whether it be the public affairs function or what we now have as Deputy Under Secretary for Field Coordination, let me say, in this case, that the judgment was that public affairs is more worthy of that kind of level than the field coordination division.

Senator PROXMIRE. Isn't this a time when HUD is cutting back pretty drastically on housing programs? Doesn't it seem incongruous to you that at a time when they are doing that, they're adding an Assistant Secretary which you haven't had in 9 years? Isn't it a time when HUD is RIFing various specialists who carry out those programs?

Mr. KNAPP. There are organizational reductions taking place within the Department, to a large extent through attrition and not seeking to refill the positions, to some lesser extent through field reductions, as there are in other agencies in the Government.

I think Ms. Raborn can more fully testify that this, in fact, does not create an additional budget authority for this particular function. There will be some realignments within the Office of Public Affairs. This is really the addition of one position to that office; it will be offset by other reductions, particularly in some of the non-personnel costs of the office.

Senator PROXMIRE. What really puzzles me is why is an Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs essential when the job is being done, has been done, can continue to be done by a deputy who has the full support of the Secretary of HUD to coordinate and carry out public relations activities? You have that now.

Mr. KNAPP. We have the position now, but the Secretary's judgment has been that the function has not been carried out as well as it might have been. He has also made the judgment that the organizational structure of the position has something to do with how well the function has been carried out.

Senator PROXMIRE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time is up.

I would just say, as I indicated, I have great respect and admiration for Ms. Raborn. I am sure she will do a fine job whatever she is assigned to do, but it puzzles me frankly, as one who has watched this agency develop—and it came after I came to the Senate in Washington—ever since it started, to see it moving in the direction of less activity and more promotion, more public affairs, and more public trying to advertise itself and less substance.

Senator D'AMATO. At this time we will swear in the nominee.

[Witness sworn.]

Senator D'AMATO. Robin, have you seen any specific examples where the Department is lacking in its ability to communicate its activities and its goals, both to the private sector and general public?

#### STATEMENT OF ROBIN RABORN

Ms. RABORN. Before I address that question, I would like to first of all thank Senator Hawkins and Senator D'Amato for their kind introductions, and I will claim both New York and Florida as my States.

I have only been at HUD a short time; however, in that time I have been carefully analyzing the current responsibilities of everyone on the public affairs staff and what their functions have been and how they have related both within the agency and in our field structure.

I do see several weaknesses and in some cases, through recommendations, have been able already to make some changes.

I have some prepared remarks which I would like to give that I think will clarify both my philosophy on public affairs and why I think it is so important to have good communications to the people on the activities of HUD at this time.

I am very pleased to appear this morning as President Reagan's nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I am very proud that Secretary Pierce has recommended me for this position.

My role, in simplest terms, is to communicate to the people of our Nation what is being done at the Department to fulfill the responsibilities that have been set out for it by the Congress. The people have a right to know what we are doing and how our programs can be useful to them. They should know how their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent.

I have prepared myself for a position like this by educational training and practical experience in management and communications in both business and Government.

This position requires a clear understanding of the goals of the Department and of the appropriate role of public affairs in keeping the public and press informed. It also requires a strategic sense of

communication; that is, setting and monitoring goals in a complex environment.

I have served as Deputy Director of Public Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget. In this capacity I was spokesperson on management issues and provided strategic communications planning on many diverse projects, including the President's Campaign against Fraud, Waste, and Mismanagement.

From the very beginning, strategic communications played an important part in the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency and in the management improvement efforts at OMB. This was done without a large public affairs staff, without massive spending.

Government employees and private citizens had to be convinced that something could be done to stop fraud and waste in Government if the problems were reported to the Inspector General.

Each of the Inspectors General designated a communications officer to work on an interagency task force to heighten awareness of things like the hotlines. The results were swift and dramatic. In one agency alone calls and letters to the hotline increased 80 percent.

This was done without any additional expenditure of funds. In fact, congressional offices were very helpful in publicizing the hotlines.

But the true benefit of any communications effort should be seen in improved effectiveness of the program, and I think we saw that with the IG program. I am certainly proud to have contributed to a government program that saved billions of dollars in the last 2 years.

My work at OMB to reduce excessive spending in the area of public affairs clearly demonstrates my commitment to efficiency and good management.

The effort to reduce unnecessary spending on Government publications and audiovisual products resulted in the canceling or consolidation of more than 2,000 publications, with cost reductions in other areas exceeding \$20 million.

Beyond the actual savings of this project, which was initiated at the request of concerned taxpayers across the country, we had new discussion across Government on the proper role of public affairs. I think that the operational changes that have been made across the Government as a result of this project will mean continued savings in years to come.

As Senator Hawkins mentioned, I also worked on the President's drug awareness campaign, helping to coordinate the communications efforts of the White House Office of Drug Policy and the Offices of the Vice President, the First Lady, and some 29 Federal agencies working to stop drug abuse in this country. I did this work voluntarily in addition to my duties at OMB. In spite of the smallest of staffs and limited resources, the Office of Drug Policy was able to rally enthusiastic support from other Government groups and the private sector. The results have been very gratifying.

I think these illustrate how important communications can be, and my experience has been that they can be very effective in augmenting programs.

This brings me to my objectives at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

First of all, I would like to say that one of the reasons I was interested in taking this job was that Secretary Pierce said that he wanted a good manager and a good planner. He was not asking for a press agent, an advance person, or a campaign manager. Indeed, my professional qualifications are not in those areas.

My objectives at the Department of Housing and Urban Development are to assure good information exchange within the agency to better support the programs of HUD and to assure honest, open, and useful communications with the people of this country and their elected officials on the activities of the agency and the services it provides.

Much of HUD's work involves letting people know about HUD's programs, what funds are available, how they can apply for them, how they can use them most effectively. Essentially, that is a communications task. That is a public affairs job.

Communication planning to support this effort is critical to the success of HUD in helping people to use its services.

I ardently believe that we have a duty to keep citizens informed and an obligation to maintain an honest, open relationship with the press. I do not believe that Government employees have a license to waste taxpayers' money on self-laudatory public relations activities, unnecessary audiovisual projects, or useless publications.

Indeed, in looking back at the history of some of the activities within the Public Affairs Office at HUD, I found that in years before there was some questionable activities like that.

If I am confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with you to communicate to the public new answers that will provide homes, jobs, safe neighborhoods, and a new sense of self-reliance for people living in our great cities and towns.

I hope to make a valuable contribution to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to serve the people, to preserve the trust that has been placed in me as a public servant, and to carry out my duties with integrity and efficiency.

Now I will be happy to answer any additional questions that you may have. Thank you.

[Complete statements follow:]

STATEMENT OF  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY-designate ROBIN RABORN  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

BEFORE THE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS

August 4, 1983

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: I am pleased to appear before you this morning as President Reagan's nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. I am proud Secretary Pierce recommended me for this position.

My role, in simplest terms, is to communicate to the people of our Nation what is being done at the Department to fulfill the responsibilities set out for us by the Congress.

The people have a right to know what we are doing and how our programs can be useful to them. They should know how their hard-earned dollars are being spent.

I have prepared myself for a position like this by educational training and practical experience in management and communications in both business and government. This position requires a clear understanding of the goals of the Department and of the appropriate role of public affairs in keeping the public and press informed. It also requires a strategic sense of communications, that is, setting and monitoring goals in a complex environment.

I have served as Deputy Director of Public Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget. In this capacity I was spokesperson on management issues and provided strategic communications planning

assistance on many diverse projects, including the President's Campaign Against Fraud, Waste and Mismanagement, which supported the work of the Inspectors General and government-wide management reforms.

From the very beginning, strategic communications planning played an important part in the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency and in the management improvement efforts at OMB. Government employees and private citizens had to be convinced that something could be done to stop waste and fraud in government if problems were reported to the IG's. Each of the Inspectors General designated a communications officer to work on an interagency task force to heighten awareness of things like the Hotline. The results were swift and dramatic. In one agency alone, calls and letters to the Hotline increased 80 percent. Only nine months after the communications effort began, public approval of the way government handles waste increased from about 30 percent to almost 80 percent. The true benefit of the communications effort is seen in the improved effectiveness of the IG program and the enhanced stature of the Inspectors General as a force for positive change. I am certainly proud to have contributed to this government program, which has saved billions of dollars in the last two years.

My work at OMB to reduce excessive spending in the area of public affairs clearly demonstrated my commitment to efficiency and the elimination of wasteful spending. The effort to cut out wasteful

spending on government publications and audiovisual products resulted in the elimination or consolidation of more than 2,000 publications with cost reductions exceeding \$20 million. Beyond the actual savings, this project... which became known as Flicks and Flacks...spurred discussion across government on the true role of public affairs. The operational changes made as a result of this project will mean continued savings in years to come.

I also worked on the President's Drug Awareness Campaign, coordinating the communications efforts of the White House Office of Drug Policy, the Vice President, the First Lady, and many Federal agencies working to stop drug abuse in this country. I did this work voluntarily in addition to my duties at OMB.

In spite of the smallest of staffs and limited resources, the Office of Drug Policy was able to rally enthusiastic support from other government groups and the private sector. The results have been gratifying.

These experiences in the Executive Branch have shown me the importance of good communications, both within an agency and among many agencies that are trying to accomplish a difficult task.

My objectives at the Department of Housing and Urban Development are to assure:

- 1) good information exchange within the Agency to better support the programs of HUD, and
- 2) honest, open and useful communications with the people of this country...and their elected Representatives...on the activities of the Agency and the services it provides.

Much of HUD's work involves letting constituents know about HUD's programs -- what funds are available, how to apply for them, how to use them most effectively. Essentially, that's a communications task -- a public affairs task. Communications planning to support this effort is critical to the success of HUD in helping people use its services.

I ardently believe we have a duty to keep citizens informed and an obligation to maintain an honest and open relationship with the press. I do not believe that government employees have a license to waste taxpayers' money on self-laudatory public relations activities, unnecessary audiovisual projects, or useless publications.

If I am confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with you to communicate to the public new answers that will provide homes, jobs, safe neighborhoods, and a new sense of self-reliance for people living in our great cities and towns.

I hope to make a valuable contribution to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to serve the people, to preserve the trust that has been placed in me as a public servant and to carry out my duties with integrity and efficiency.

Now, I will be happy to answer your questions to the best of my ability.

Thank you.

## STATEMENT FOR COMPLETION BY PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES

Name: Eaborn (LAST) Robin (FIRST) ---- (OTHER)

Position to which nominated: Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Date of nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: HUD 4/7/53 (DAY) (MONTH) (YEAR) Place of birth: Washington, D.C.

Marital status: Single Full name of spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and ages of children: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

| Education: | Institution                        | Dates attended | Degrees received                | Dates of degrees |
|------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
|            | <u>Vanderbilt University</u>       | <u>1971-75</u> | <u>B.A.</u>                     | <u>1975</u>      |
|            | <u>Middlebury College</u>          | <u>1973-74</u> | <u>---</u>                      |                  |
|            | <u>Madrid, Spain</u>               |                |                                 |                  |
|            | <u>American Graduate School of</u> |                |                                 |                  |
|            | <u>International Management</u>    | <u>1975-76</u> | <u>Masters of</u>               | <u>1976</u>      |
|            |                                    |                | <u>International Management</u> |                  |
|            | <u>American University</u>         | <u>1982</u>    | <u>---</u>                      |                  |
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Honors and awards: List below all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, military medals, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognitions for outstanding service or achievement.

Spanish Honorary Fraternity

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**Memberships:** List below all memberships and offices held in professional, fraternal, business, scholarly, civic, charitable and other organizations.

| Organization                            | Office held<br>(if any) | Dates      |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Republican National Committee           | ----                    | since 1977 |
| New York Road Runners                   | -----                   | since 1977 |
| Friends of Kennedy Center               | ----                    | since 1982 |
| National Federation of Republican Women | ---                     | since 1961 |
| National Presbyterian Center            | ---                     | since 1961 |
|                                         |                         |            |
|                                         |                         |            |

**Employment record:** List below all positions held since college, including the title or description of job, name of employer, location of work, and dates of inclusive employment.

|             |                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2/81--5/83  | Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President<br>Deputy Assistant to the Director: Served as Deputy Director of Public<br>Affairs and official spokesman |
| 7/80--2/81  | Colgate Palmolive, New York, NY<br>Product Manager, New Business Development                                                                                                  |
| 3/78--7/80  | American Cyanamid, Shulton Division, Wayne, New Jersey<br>Product Manager, New Business Development                                                                           |
| 10/76--3/78 | Revlon, International Division, New York, NY<br>Assistant Product Manager, New Business Development                                                                           |
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Government  
experience:

List any experience in or direct association with Federal, State, or local governments, including any advisory, consultative, honorary or other part-time service or positions.

February 1981-Mar 16, 1983 Office of Management and Budget

Deputy Assistant to the Director

May 16, 1983 to Present--U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development, Special Assistant to the Secretary

At various times during my employment with OMB, I served on detail

or as an advisor to the WH Office of Drug Policy; the Office of Special Counsel, MSPB; and  
Published O.P.I.C.

writings: List the titles, publishers and dates of books, articles, reports or other published materials you have written.

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Political  
affiliations  
and activities:

List all memberships and offices held in and services rendered to all political parties or election committees during the last 10 years.

Participated in campaigns as a volunteer for the following Republican candidates: President Richard Nixon, President Gerald Ford, President Ronald Reagan (New York City Headquarters), Lamar Alexander, first campaign for Governor of Tennessee, Senator Howard Baker, Representative Bill Brock, Senator Al D'Amato. President, Vanderbilt University college chapter of Ripon Society, 1974-75. Member: Ripon Society 1971-1979; Member: RNC since 1976; Member: National Federation of Republican Women

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## Political

## contributions:

Itemize all political contributions of \$500 or more to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee or similar entity during the last eight years and identify the specific amounts, dates, and names of the recipients.

\_\_\_\_\_

No contributions above \$500.00

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## Qualifications:

State fully your qualifications to serve in the position to which you have been named.  
(attach sheet)

See attachment.

Future employment  
relationships:

1. Indicate whether you will sever all connections with your present employer, business firm, association or organization if you are confirmed by the Senate.

I am presently employed by the U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development and will be continuing service there after confirmation.

2. As far as can be foreseen, state whether you have any plans after completing government service to resume employment, affiliation or practice with your previous employer, business firm, association or organization.

I do not plan to return to any of my private sector employers.

3. Has anybody made you a commitment to a job after you leave government?

No.

4. Do you expect to serve the full term for which you have been appointed?

Yes.

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Potential conflicts  
of interest:

1. Describe any financial arrangements or deferred compensation agreements or other continuing dealings with business associates, clients or customers who will be affected by policies which you will influence in the position to which you have been nominated.

There are none.

2. List any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which might involve potential conflicts of interest with the position to which you have been nominated.

There are none to the best of my knowledge.

3. Describe any business relationship, dealing or financial transaction (other than tax-paying) which you have had during the last 10 years with the Federal Government, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that might in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest with the position to which you have been nominated.

There are none to the best of my knowledge.

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4. List any lobbying activity during the past 10 years in which you have engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat or modification of any legislation at the national level of government or affecting the administration and execution of national law or public policy.

I have not participated in any direct lobbying of the Federal

Government.

5. Explain how you will resolve any potential conflict of interest that may be disclosed by your responses to the above items.

Not applicable.

Civil, criminal and  
investigatory  
actions:

1. Give the full details of any civil or criminal proceeding in which you were a defendant or any inquiry or investigation by a Federal, State, or local agency in which you were the subject of the inquiry or investigation.

None.

2. Give the full details of any proceeding, inquiry or investigation by any professional association including any bar association in which you were the subject of the proceeding, inquiry or investigation.

None.

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STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

My role, in simplest terms, is to communicate to the people of our nation what is being done at the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The people are our constituents and the financiers of our activities. They have a right to know what we are doing and how their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent.

I have prepared myself for a position like this by educational training and practical experience in marketing and communications planning in both business and government. This position requires a clear understanding of the goals of the Administration and of the appropriate role of public affairs in keeping the public and press informed.

I have served as Deputy Director of Public Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget. In this capacity I was spokesman on management issues and provided strategic communications planning assistance on many diverse projects including:

- The President's Program for Economic Recovery;
- The President's Campaign Against Fraud, Waste and Mismanagement,  
which supported the work of the Inspectors General and government-wide management reforms;
- The President's Drug Awareness Campaign,  
coordinating the efforts of the White House Office of Drug Policy, the Vice President, the First Lady, and the many Federal agencies working to stop drug abuse in this country;
- Establishment of a congressional and public relations office for the Office of Special Counsel of the Merit Systems Protection Board;
- Initial communications planning for The President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control.

These experiences at OMB and within the Executive Office of the President have shown me the importance of good communications both within an agency and among many agencies that are trying to accomplish a difficult task.

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My objectives at the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development are to assure that there are;

- 1) good internal communication within the Agency to strongly support the programs of HUD and
- 2) honest and open communications with the people of this country on the activities of the Agency.

You will find that I ardently believe that we have a duty to keep citizens informed and an obligation to maintain an honest and open relationship with the free press. However, I do not believe that government public affairs officers have a license to waste taxpayers' money on self-laudatory public relations activities, or useless audio visual projects, or useless publications. My perspective on this was clearly seen in my work while at OMB to reduce excessive spending in the area of public affairs.

If I am confirmed by this Committee, I look forward to working with you to develop new answers to urban problems that will provide homes, jobs, safe neighborhoods and a new sense of self-reliance for people living in our great cities.

I hope to make a valuable contribution to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to serve the Secretary and the President, to preserve the trust that has been placed in me as a public servant and to carry out my duties with integrity and efficiency.

Thank you.

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Senator D'AMATO. Robin, will you agree to avoid all conflicts of interest or even the appearances of such conflicts in your service as Assistant Secretary?

Ms. RABORN. I will.

Senator D'AMATO. Do you agree to appear and testify before this committee and any other duly constituted committee of the Congress when requested?

Ms. RABORN. I will.

Senator D'AMATO. Could you just in general terms explain to me what goals you have set as Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs and what you see as your major problems and obstacles?

Ms. RABORN. In any approach to a communication program, I have found that the first task is to set up good communications internally. I see a real weakness in the information that is now going out to the field.

I believe very strongly that the most important people that need to be reached are our constituents and that we must be focusing not on Washington, D.C., but on all the many towns and cities where our constituents live.

One of the first tasks that I hope to complete is to strengthen the public affairs network in the field so that people have information on the many new programs that we have.

Senator D'AMATO. In your testimony, you refer to the role that you played in reducing spending in the areas of public affairs at OMB. I am glad to hear that.

In what ways do you see that cost-cutting in these areas of public affairs might also be undertaken while educating the public?

Our chairman, Senator Garn, has just arrived.

The CHAIRMAN. Just continue, please.

Ms. RABORN. I think there is a need to work smarter. I think that management should not be judged by the size of the budget or the size of the staff.

There are many ways to work smarter in the Public Affairs Office of HUD. As an example, there are some very simple changes, one of which has already been put in effect. I found that when I arrived our internal news-clipping service was putting out two editions a day. They were identical. One was xeroxed and arrived very late in the morning; the other was offset printed and arrived at 4 or 5 in the afternoon.

Senator PROXMIRE. Could I interrupt just a minute?

I apologize, I have to go to the floor, but I would appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, if Senator Sasser could be permitted to submit questions to the nominee. He has asked to do that.

Senator D'AMATO. So ordered.

[Response to written questions of Senator Sasser can be found on p. 26.]

Senator D'AMATO. Continue.

Ms. RABORN. To complete my answer, we changed the news-clipping service, and we have one edition that comes out early in the morning because, as you know and I know, old news is useless. It is now on the desk at 8:30 in the morning. It is distributed to many more people on the staff. It uses half the number of staff at a 60-percent reduction in cost, saving the Department about \$47,000 a year with just that one change.

Senator D'AMATO. So these are the kinds of programs that you feel that you can bring to the agency to effect cost reductions and improve communications.

In the area of communications, what area do you think we fail to emphasize in terms of the public perception of HUD, that perception that may say to the public:

Well, we have lost a sense of compassion in dealing with the housing needs of the American people, the elderly and others that cannot afford decent housing without Government assistance?

Ms. RABORN. As I have stated, I have only been at HUD a short time, but I do know, in looking at my numbers, that HUD is now providing more housing to more people than ever before in the history of this country, and I think that is something that needs to be communicated.

But in addition to that, there are many important refinements that we are making in programs that must be communicated to people so that they can use programs better.

As an example, although I have not quantified this problem, it has become apparent that many Hispanic Americans are unaware of their rights in the area of fair housing. The usual approach to solving a problem like this is to print a pamphlet; however, since I speak Spanish myself, I took a look at the pamphlets and found them totally unintelligible and have spoken to our Assistant Secretary of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. We will be looking at planning how best to reach Hispanic Americans to let them know what their rights are.

Senator D'AMATO. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you.

Let me apologize first for being late. This has never happened since I have been chairman. I might as well be honest. It will get out anyway. There were enough witnesses, Senator Percy and Senator Stevens. We played tennis this morning together very early, at 6:30, and when I went back to my car, all of my clothes, including my car keys, were locked inside the car. [Laughter.]

I didn't think I could come in tennis shoes and tennis shorts to a hearing, and the thing that really bothers me is not my stupidity in doing that. I have never done it before, and now I join the ranks of those other stupid people who have done so. But it cost me \$37 to get it opened up to even get here now.

So now it is in the public record, and I confess to everybody.

Senator D'AMATO. You are forgiven.

The CHAIRMAN. It wouldn't have bothered me so much if I had done it accidentally, but I deliberately thought, well, the tennis court is right next to the car, I will leave the keys in the car. So it wasn't even by accident, and I deliberately left them in the car. So that made it even worse.

But I do apologize for being late, and I appreciate Senator D'Amato taking over.

I will not take time, coming in late, not knowing what questions have been asked, so I don't duplicate. I have no questions.

Ms. RABORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that is a very colorful excuse.

As a matter of fact, I was out running this morning and ran into one of my neighbors, who is occasionally one of your tennis partners. He is a walker, not a runner. I stopped to walk with him, and he says, "I think you had better pick up your pace and make sure you are on time because the chairman is never late."

The CHAIRMAN. I called in a panic, and I said, "Get somebody to start that hearing on time. Even though I am not there, that hearing has to start on time."

So I appreciate it. Did we start on time?

Senator D'AMATO. Yes, we did. Your unblemished record continues.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator D'AMATO. I might also state for the record that I am very impressed with the demeanor and manner in which Robin Raborn presents herself, and also the qualifications and background that she brings to this job.

In programs where we are spending billions of dollars, there is a perception out there that we don't care, that the administration is not moving in this area to meet the needs of the poor, of the indigent, and those who need help. That is just simply not the case, as the chairman well knows. He not only chairs this committee, but the Subcommittee on Appropriations that allocates HUD funds.

So I think that we need the kind of expertise that Robin can bring in the area of communications, sound management philosophies, and I am very much impressed.

And I might add for the record that Senator Proxmire has also indicated with respect to your capabilities that he certainly has no question in that regard.

I have no further questions.

The committee stands in recess.

[Whereupon, at 10:10 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

## RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ADRESSED TO ROBIN RABORN FROM SENATOR SASSER

Question #1:      What was OMB's assessment of public relations activities by the Federal government?

Answer:            I must preface my answer by stating that I am no longer employed by the Office of Management and Budget and am, therefore, expressing my personal evaluation of activities related to public affairs while I was working at OMB.

The role of the public affairs office at OMB was to communicate to the people and the press what was being done at the Office of Management and Budget to fulfill the responsibilities set out for it by the Congress and by the President. Information related to the budget or to management was given on request to the press and the public as promptly and thoroughly as possible, without incurring unnecessary wasteful spending.

We, at OMB, were prompted by the people of the United States to examine government publications and audio visual products produced by the Federal agencies. Our office received hundreds of unsolicited examples of publications and other public relations materials that taxpayers felt were a waste of money.

## Question #1 continued

On April 21, 1981, pursuant to a Presidential directive, the Office of Management and Budget issued Bulletin No. 81-16 which required agencies to review existing publications, eliminate those that were unnecessary, develop an internal control system to prevent waste in the future and to report their results. The agencies identified 12,217 periodicals and pamphlets with a total number of copies printed of almost 860 million. Cancellations, consolidations, and cost reductions resulted in significant savings with the promise of less wasteful spending in the future.

This project illustrates the guideline that was followed at OMB--that we have an obligation to provide information to the public, but that this does not give us the license to spend money wastefully on public relations that do not truly serve the public.

Question #2:

In view of the fact that only a very few of the largest agencies of Federal government have individuals serving in the post of Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, why is this position being filled at HUD at this point--especially when the Department's programs are undergoing major budgetary cuts?

Answer:

Of the top thirteen Executive Agencies, 7 of those people heading Public Affairs have the title of Assistant Secretary.

The position of Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development was authorized by the Congress in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Precisely because the priorities and activities of HUD are changing, better communication to the people is needed. Much of HUD's work involves letting people know about HUD's programs, what funds are available, how they can apply for them, how they can use them most effectively. Essentially, that is a communications task. Communication planning to support technical assistance is critical to the success of HUD in helping people use its services.

## Question #2 Continued

Direction of this communications effort can be best performed by someone with the departmentwide focus of an Assistant Secretary, rather than the limited focus of a position that is a staff function within the Office of the Secretary.

One of the first tasks that I hope to complete is to strengthen the public affairs network in the field so that people have information on a local level on our many new programs at HUD. As I have stated before, our most important constituents are outside of Washington, D. C. and we must do a better job of reaching people in the towns and cities where HUD programs are put into action.

Question #3:

What, specifically, do you expect to have as primary day-to-day responsibilities in the area of public affairs and public relations for the department?

As Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs I will be in charge of communication with the press and the public and will provide guidance to improve internal communication within the agency. This responsibility will cover a wide variety of programs. As an example, FHA mortgagees must know what policies are being set by HUD that will influence the way they process loan applications. People must know what their rights are for Fair Housing so they may be protected from discrimination. In the area of Fair Housing, we serve both English and Spanish speaking audiences.

It will also be my duty to ensure that the taxpayers' money is not wasted on unnecessary internal publications, useless audio visual projects, or wasteful pamphlets and publications. I also believe that government employees do not have a license to waste taxpayers' money on self-laudatory public relations activities. The budget of the Public Affairs Office must be carefully

## Question #3 continued

studied to reflect the new responsibilities of the office as a central point of control for spending by all departments on communications efforts. Additional review is needed for proper allocation of office space, personnel and equipment.

The Assistant Secretary is the principal advisor to the Secretary and the Departmental staff on matters relating to communications strategy, public information, participation in public events, contact with the media, and the presentation of policy decisions to the public. The Assistant Secretary will also coordinate communications activities with other agencies, with the White House and with outside organizations dealing with HUD.

Question #4: It would be helpful if you would comment in somewhat greater detail than in the statements prepared thus far as to your qualifications to assume these responsibilities.

Answer: At Vanderbilt University, my undergraduate course of study stressed political science and language skills. Managing people and communicating ideas were essential to my work there as an editor on the campus newspaper, as a director of the theater and as president of a political club.

At the American Graduate School of International Management I received a masters in international management emphasizing marketing. My professional work in marketing for several major corporations in New York required sharp strategic planning and careful budgeting. My performance was based on my ability to meet management objectives on time and within budget.

In February, 1981, I assumed the position of Deputy Director of Public Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget. In addition to my press duties as spokesperson on management issues, I prepared communications

## Question #4 continued

plans for many special projects. Among these projects were:

o The President's Campaign Against Fraud,  
Waste and Mismanagement

created and directed communications effort for the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency serving the Inspector General. Chaired a 25 member interagency communications group.

--officially detailed to The Office of Special Counsel, Merit Systems Protection Board to develop both congressional liaison and public liaison programs for this office, including training of staff.

o The President's Drug Awareness Program

--Designed communications plan for the Drug Abuse Policy Office at the White House to coordinate 29 Federal agencies, the First Lady's drug education program and the Vice President's enforcement effort into a consolidated administration program.

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